



Money Matters: Have your say on Buckinghamshire Council's spending priorities for 2024 to 2025

Open date: 31 August 2023

Close date: 15 October 2023

Name: Consultation and Engagement Team

Email: consultations@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Overview

We want to know which services you think should be the main priorities in our budget for next year, and what you think about our plans for how next year's budget should be spent.

In recent years, financial pressures have had a huge impact on families, businesses and organisations.

Councils can't escape these impacts and are facing sharply rising costs at the same time as more and more people are finding themselves in need of support.

Continuing to provide our main services such as waste collection, planning and road maintenance whilst also supporting our local children and adults in need is challenging.

To ensure we can continue to help the most vulnerable, we are having to make difficult decisions around money and how we provide our services going forward.

Countrywide, councils are facing huge financial challenges. You may have seen in the news that a number of councils have stated that they cannot meet their costs.

In comparison, we remain in a relatively stable position. This is in large part because, since becoming a unitary in 2020, we have worked hard to become ever more efficient and reduce running costs.

So far, we have delivered £45m additional savings and income, with a further £43.9m of savings and income proposed by the end of 2025. That's a total £89m of savings and income over our first five years as a council – equivalent to 18% of our net budget for 2023 to 2024.

However, we are also experiencing the impact of rising costs and rising demand and need to take difficult decisions as we plan for the future in order to be sure that we continue to remain financially balanced.

Now we are looking for your feedback.

We are working up plans for the council's 2024 to 2025 budget and we need you to tell us how you think we should be spending your money.

In considering your response, please do take time to reflect on the wider needs of the whole of Buckinghamshire in addition to the specific priorities for yourself, your family, your immediate community, your business or your organisation.

How the council is funded

We provide more than 700 different services in total and our budget sets out how much we will need to spend on these services and where that money will come from.

The money we receive from council tax covers 81% of the cost of providing all of these services – from paying for care packages for adults who need it, to providing emergency accommodation for homeless people and vulnerable children, as well as the essential services everyone relies on like bin collections, road repairs and keeping streets and open spaces clean and safe.

The other 19% of the council's budget is funded by money from Business Rates (13%), the New Homes Bonus (1%) and other un-ringfenced grants (5%).

It's also important to note that the funding for the running of our schools is not set or controlled by the council. We distribute this to schools on behalf of government as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

How your money is spent

All councils have a legal duty to limit their spending to the income they receive each year. In other words, our budget must balance.

Most of our budget each year needs to be spent on the services we are required by law to provide, such as social care for adults and children. This is known as 'statutory' spend.

The spending breakdown for the year 2023 to 2024 (net) is:

- Adult Social Care – £184,669,000
- Children's Social Care – £87,892,000
- Roads and Transportation – £61,785,000
- Costs of running the council – £52,094,000
- Education (excluding Dedicated Schools Grant) – £15,075,000
- Waste and Recycling – £12,887,000
- Customer Services – £11,337,000
- Housing and Homelessness – £6,651,000
- Planning – £6,096,000
- Culture and Leisure – £4,623,000
- Regulatory Services – £3,148,000
- Street Cleaning – £2,689,000
- Community Boards – £2,669,000
- Strategic Infrastructure, Town Centre Regeneration and Economic Growth – £2,593,000
- Community Safety – £1,974,000
- Environment – £1,386,000

This adds up to a total net spend of £457,571,000 for 2023 to 2024 (total takes account of rounding).

Net spend is expenditure minus the income we receive from customers and ringfenced grants.

We are proposing to allocate the 2024 to 2025 budget in a similar way.

More information on the service areas

Adult Social Care:

- Care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults which includes support for people:

- living at home
- living in care
- coming out of hospital
- with disabilities
- Mental health services

Children's Social Care:

- Improving outcomes and actively promoting the life chances of children in care and care leavers
- Safeguarding and encouraging the welfare of children, including protection against child sexual exploitation
- Support for children with disabilities
- Fostering and adoption services
- Helping young people stay away from crime and avoid re-offending

Roads and transportation:

- Road maintenance including inspections, pothole and road repair, and emergency response
- Client, public and home to school transport
- Transport strategy, including our ambitions, policies and plans for future investment in local transport
- Keeping roads safe and improving the flow of traffic
- Rights of way, including footpaths

Costs of running the council:

- 'Helping Hand'- our scheme for helping people struggling with the cost of living pressures
- Council Tax collection and Housing Benefit payments
- Legal and Democratic services, including elections
- Risk, Audit and Insurance services
- Information Communication Technology
- Finance
- Human Resources and Organisational Development

Education (excluding the schools' Dedicated Schools Grant):

- School admissions, school improvement and school place planning
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- Support for pupils not in education, employment or training
- Early help for children and young people
- Adult learning and skills

Waste and recycling:

- Collection and disposal of waste
- Household waste recycling centres
- Converting non-recyclable waste into electricity (Energy from waste)

Customer services:

- Customer Contact Centre
- Face to face information, advice and support to residents at Council Access Points
- Digital and web services

Planning:

- Advice services and management of the planning application process
- Investigating alleged breaches and taking enforcement action where appropriate
- Building control
- Development management, including highways
- Strategic and local planning policy, including local development plans and neighbourhood planning

Culture and leisure:

- Country parks, parks and play areas
- Leisure centres
- Libraries
- Arts and culture
- Museums and heritage

Regulatory services:

- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Environmental health
- Trading standards
- Coroners
- Licensing
- Registrars and celebratory services

Economic growth, regeneration and strategic infrastructure:

- Highways infrastructure projects
- Town centre regeneration
- Supporting the local economy through jobs, skills, homes and amenities

Housing and homelessness:

- Advice when looking for a home
- Help if you're homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Housing grants, loans and debt advice

Community Boards:

- Local partnerships between the council, community groups, organisations and local people to identify key local issues and take action to address them

Street cleaning:

- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance
- Dog control

Community safety:

- Crime, anti-social behaviour and drug or alcohol abuse
- Domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking or harassment
- Extremism and terrorism
- Modern slavery and child exploitation

Environment:

- Protecting and improving the environment
- Tackling the challenges presented by climate change
- Energy and water management
- Flood management

Public Health services are funded by specific grants. This includes services such as support for stopping smoking, alcohol and drugs, eating healthily, ageing well and being more active.

How to have your say

You can tell us your views in one of the following ways:

- complete the online survey at [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/money-matters-consultation](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/money-matters-consultation)
- complete, and return, the printed version of the survey below

If you have any questions about this activity, please email us at consultations@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Please tell us your views by midnight on Sunday 15 October 2023.

What happens next

We will consider all the feedback we receive and use the findings to help us develop the draft budget further.

A detailed draft budget will be published in late 2023 for further feedback and scrutiny. It will then be finalised and agreed in February 2024.

Privacy

We will use the information you provide here only for this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details. For more information about data and privacy, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

If you have questions about data and privacy, please email us on dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Or write to our Data Protection Officer at Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF.

Printed consultation survey

Your priorities

1. Which services would you prioritise for council funding?

You can select up to 5 services, in no particular order.

Please tick (✓) one option per column

	1	2	3	4	5
Care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Car parking such as car parks, street parking	<input type="checkbox"/>				

More answer options on the next page

Community safety such as working with other organisations to tackle anti-social behaviour, violence and hate crime	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Culture and tourism such as museums, country parks and archaeology	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational services such as childcare, pre-school, school admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Environmental health and nuisance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing such as finding a home, social tenancy issues, homelessness issues	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Library services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Maintaining parks, open spaces, playing fields, rights of way and the countryside	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pavement maintenance including footpaths	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Planning services such as advice, enforcement, development plans, planning applications, building control	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Protecting the environment such as development of green spaces, renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public Health services such as stopping smoking, drug / alcohol services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Road infrastructure and planning	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Road maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Services and support for children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Services to attract and support local businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>				

More answer options on the next page

Sport and leisure services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Town centre regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Waste collection	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Waste management such as fly-tipping prosecutions and recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. Which services would you not prioritise for council funding?

You can select up to 5 services, in no particular order.

Please tick (✓) one option per column

	1	2	3	4	5
Care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Car parking such as car parks, street parking	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Community safety such as working with other organisations to tackle anti-social behaviour, violence and hate crime	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Culture and tourism such as museums, country parks and archaeology	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Educational services such as childcare, pre-school, school admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Environmental health and nuisance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing such as finding a home, social tenancy issues, homelessness issues	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Library services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Maintaining parks, open spaces, playing fields, rights of way and the countryside	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pavement maintenance including footpaths	<input type="checkbox"/>				

More answer options on the next page

Planning services such as advice, enforcement, development plans, planning applications, building control	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Protecting the environment such as development of green spaces, renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public Health services such as stopping smoking, drug / alcohol services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Road infrastructure and planning	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Road maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Services and support for children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Services to attract and support local businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sport and leisure services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Town centre regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Waste collection	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Waste management such as fly-tipping prosecutions and recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Proposed budget allocation for 2024 to 2025

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with how we propose to allocate Buckinghamshire Council's budget for 2024 to 2025?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

4. How easy to understand was the following information?

Please tick (✓) one option for each statement

	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Not very easy	Not at all easy	I don't know
How the council is funded	<input type="checkbox"/>				
How the council spends its money	<input type="checkbox"/>				
What 'statutory' spend is	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The financial challenges the council faces	<input type="checkbox"/>				

5. If you have any other comments about the proposed budget allocation for 2024 to 2025, please tell us here:

About you

We will use the information you provide here only for the purpose of this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal information.

6. Which of the following describe you?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- I live in Buckinghamshire
- I work in Buckinghamshire
- I study in Buckinghamshire
- I represent or own a business in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a community or voluntary group in Buckinghamshire

More answer options on the next page

- I am an elected representative in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a Parish / Town Council or Town Committee in Buckinghamshire
- I work for Buckinghamshire Council
- Other (please give details below):

7. How did you find out about this consultation?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Local media (newspaper, radio or TV)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Nextdoor
- Buckinghamshire Council website or Your Voice Bucks website
- Newsletter from Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council
- From Buckinghamshire Council staff
- Through working at Buckinghamshire Council
- Poster
- Word of mouth
- Local Community Board
- Local Councillor
- Local Parish / Town Council or Town Committee
- Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation
- Other (please give details below):

8. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation (e.g. a business or a voluntary group)?

Please tick (✓) one option

- As an individual (go to question 10)
- On behalf of an organisation

On behalf of an organisation

9. Please provide the following details:

Name of organisation:

Your job title:

End of survey for organisations

More about you

We want to hear from as many people as possible to understand the views and needs across Buckinghamshire. The following questions help us see if the communities we serve have had the opportunity to be heard through this activity.

All questions are optional. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer, or you can skip all the questions.

10. What is your postcode?

We want to understand the views of people living in different areas. You don't have to provide your postcode, but it helps us plan and make considered decisions.

11. What is your age?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different age groups.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34

More answer options on the next page

- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- Over 85
- Prefer not to say

12. Are you:

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different sexes.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

13. Do you consider yourself to have a disability / disabilities, impairment(s) or long-term health condition(s)?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of disabled people, people with impairments and people with long-term health conditions.

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Disability / disabilities
- Impairment(s)
- Long-term health condition(s)
- No
- Prefer not to say

14. How would you describe your ethnicity?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different ethnicities.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Asian - British
- Asian – Bangladeshi

More answer options on the next page

- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Pakistani
- Any other Asian background - Please give details below
- Black - African
- Black - British
- Black - Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background - Please give details below
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - Mixed or Multiple Ethnic backgrounds British
- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background - Please give details below
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or English traveller
- White - Irish Traveller
- White - European
- Any other White background - Please give details below
- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Other ethnic group - Arab British
- Other ethnic group - Please give details below
- Prefer not to say

Please give other details here:

15. Are there any children aged under 18 in your household?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different households.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

16. What is your employment status?

Why we ask this: We want to understand the experiences and views of different employment statuses.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed full-time or part-time
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Carer
- Student
- Looking after the family or home
- Long-term illness or condition that prevents you from working
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please give details below):

End of consultation survey

Thank you for completing the survey.

Please return your completed survey by **Sunday 15 October 2023**. You can:

- email it to consultations@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- post it to **Money Matters Consultation**, Business Intelligence Team, Buckinghamshire Council, Walton Street Offices, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1UA
- take it to one of our Council Access Points